

Summer 2009

## With Honors (Vol. 2)

Iowa State University Honors Program

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# THE IOWA STATE HONORS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

# WITH HONORS

SUMMER 2009  
VOL. 2, NO. 1

The Honors Program appreciates the leadership and generosity of Mark Law ('81, electrical engineering), Honors Alumni Board chair, whose gift makes this newsletter possible. A letter from Mark outlining his vision for the Honors Program appears on this page.

## News from the Alumni Board

Memories, stories, and plans for the future marked the founding meeting of the Honors Alumni Board in early March.

The meeting offered Board members a chance to reconnect with old friends and meet current students, who greatly enjoyed their lunch with alumni. The weekend's discussions quickly made clear the fact that, while the program has grown enormously, student life remains at the heart of Honors.

The key to Osborn Cottage has been replaced by electronic access to Jischke. Card games have given way to late-night video competitions. Yet the social and interpersonal connections are still vital to each Honors student's success. The

personal connections made in the Honors Program are among the most lasting and valued by our alumni.

The Board discussed ways to maintain and improve the Honors Program. Suggestions include strengthening and extending research and leadership opportunities, and giving students more opportunities to learn from one another. Board chair Mark Law offered to write a letter outlining ideas for expanding and improving the Honors experience. (The letter appears below.)

The next Alumni Board meeting will include greater involvement by current students and updates on initiatives that emerged from this spring's discussions.

## A Letter from Board Chair Mark Law

Dear fellow Honors alumni,

Memories of friends I made and classes I took through Iowa State's Honors Program are still with me. Do students in Dr. Mathew's class still go to the board for Integral races? I am still friends with colleagues I met through the Iowa State Honors Program. The Program was a wonderful experience, offering me opportunities and guidance that would not otherwise have been available. Undoubtedly, your experiences in Osborn Cottage, and with professors, classes, and friends you met through the Honors Program, were equally as rewarding.

I married Alison, my college sweetheart, after graduation and we have two wonderful kids. I received a Ph.D. at Stanford and now chair the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at the University of Florida. Alison is a community organizer and works on education and recreation issues around town.

Our new Honors Program can be so much more than you and I experienced a few years ago, or a few decades ago.

With your help, we can enrich the lives of current and future Honors students. Here are just a few ideas *see "Letter," page 4*

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WITH HONORS



# Honors News Roundup

- The past year marked a transition for Honors 121, the seminar for first-year Honors students. Each section selected a theme—from “Tour d’Ames” to “Where’s Waldo?”—to help its members forge a common identity, organize the tours, speakers, and discussions that are an important part of Hon 121, and create a final group project. Board games, books and videos were among the final projects for the first-year class of 2008.
- What do you do when a freshman is not a freshman—when new students enter with so many credits that they are already “sophomores”? Honors has faced that dilemma, with family members inquiring whether their son or daughter is ineligible for FHP because of sophomore standing. As this trend is likely to continue, we’ve changed FHP to, well, FHP—the First-Year Honors Program. This change in terminology also keeps Honors in sync with many programs in higher education which have adopted “first-year” as the preferred term.
- The Honors Program has received approval for a new Learning Community for transfer Honors students. The Program has streamlined procedures for transfer students to enter Honors and begun to coordinate outreach to the many transfer students who are eligible for Honors. The Honors Transfer Learning Community will offer transfer students an opportunity to meet one another, to learn about Iowa State and Honors, and to discover academic, research, and leadership opportunities on campus. Iowa State is nationally recognized for its Learning Communities—of which, it could be said, Honors is the largest and oldest.
- Honors students were busy with research this year! Iowa State’s Undergraduate Research Symposium, in its third year, included 67 participants, of whom 42 were members of Honors. Ten Honors students were among the 22 Iowa State undergraduates who presented their work at Research in the Capitol, a meeting of state legislators with student researchers from Iowa’s Regent institutions. And 16 first-year Honors students presented the fruits of their research mentorships at the Honors Poster Presentation.
- Jean-Pierre Taoutel, senior lecturer in World Languages and Cultures, and Kathleen Waggoner, adjunct associate professor in Political Science and Sociology, received Honors Awards for Excellence in Teaching and Advising this year. Joan Cunnick, associate professor of Animal Science, received the Robert W. Parks Award for faculty, and Paul Castleberry, adviser in the College of Engineering, was awarded the Parks prize as a Friend of Honors.
- The ranks of ISU Honors Program alumni increased by 111 this year. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences led the way with 34 new honors graduates, followed by Design with 28 and Business with 15. Congratulations to all!



## One Scene of Excellent Dissembling

This year’s seniors worked on their Honors projects in laboratories, in farm fields, and even abroad. Mariana Seda (’09, English), left, cast and directed Act One of Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* for her project, which was performed in the Food Science courtyard. Mariana also found time to play the lead in *Gypsy*, this year’s Stars Over VEISHEA production. Mariana, who minored in performing arts, worked at Valleyfair in Minneapolis this summer before heading to the coast to pursue a career in theater.

## Classroom Visit via iMac

Students in Honors 302, Business Communication, enjoyed a “virtual guest speaker,” Erik Distler (’03, accounting and finance) in April. Erik had read in *With Honors* about planned connections between Honors alumni and current students, and he wanted to get involved. In his virtual visit, Erik offered advice on internships, career planning, and making the most of Honors. As an employee of Deloitte, Erik worked after graduation on projects from Washington, D.C., to Australia. Currently he works with the Siegfried Group, a consulting firm in accounting and finance, in San Francisco.

## Honors Students Garner Recognition

Three students in the Honors Program recently received recognition in rigorous national programs. You can learn more about these and other terrific students on our website, [www.honors.iastate.edu/happenings/natl\\_recognition.php](http://www.honors.iastate.edu/happenings/natl_recognition.php).

- Biochemistry major Goran Micevic has been selected as a 2009 Goldwater Scholar by the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. An active student researcher who has worked at ISU, the Mayo Clinic, and the German Cancer Research Center in Heidelberg, Goran plans to pursue a combined M.D-Ph.D. degree when he graduates in 2010.
- Two students were recognized with honorable mentions in national competitions. Biology major Katherine Tsamis received an honorable mention from the Goldwater Scholarship foundation. Kathy, an Honors Program Leader, is aiming for a career in science. Clark Richardson (’09, B.S. Ag Business and International Ag, B.A. Political Science and Economics) was recognized in the 2009 USA Today All-USA Academic Team competition. Clark plans to attend law school after working in the Teach for America program.

## Alumni Profiles

### Carol Jahnke Brumwell

Carol Jahnke Brumwell (’77, mathematics) was part of the experimental Freshman Honors Program in 1973-74, sometimes called Guinea Pigs 1 (GP1). She’s been at the forefront of change ever since. “When I started at ISU,” she recalls, “slide rules were our only classroom calculation devices. By the time I graduated, electronic calculators were the norm.”

Carol recalls with pleasure the GP1 class—“a wonderful group of creative, unorthodox students”—who took English classes and seminars together. Carol’s class “created an Honors study area/lounge in Osborn Cottage, painting a back porch room and bringing in large pillows.” (The descendants of those pillows are now a fixture in a Jischke Honors Building classroom.)

Carol graduated with the credentials to teach high-school math but turned to computer programming and has spent a career in information technology (IT). “When I started working,” she says, “computer punch cards and mainframes with tape drives were the tools of big industry. Six years later, I worked for a startup that made a desktop computer that cost as much as a new car and was considered ‘affordable’ by small businesses!”

Now semi-retired, Carol does consulting, using her skills in leadership and project management, and volunteers with LDA Minnesota, a nonprofit agency that helps people of all ages learn to read and to cope with learning disabilities such as ADHD and dyslexia. She and her husband, Dennis Brumwell (’75, electrical engineering) have made many trips to national parks, and Carol enjoys reading, gardening, and “cat-tending”: “I hold the door open while the cat solves differential equations before stepping through.”

Carol is glad that Honors students have the option of Honors housing, “a feature our GP1 group proposed.” In her ISU days, to live and work in a quiet, studious atmosphere “required moving off-campus.” Still, she wouldn’t trade her experience with the Honors program—“the leadership and support of Ann Feyerherm and Liz Beck, the fascinating discussions led by Dr. Lewis and Dr. Larsen about sci-

ence in ‘real world’ settings,” and also the “brilliance, humor and camaraderie of my classmates, who awed and inspired me.”

### Keegan Kautzky

When Keegan Kautzky came to ISU, he was a “business/pre-law major with an interest in Latin American issues but no real understanding of what I wanted to do.” When he graduated in 2000 with a major in political science, he knew where he was going and why.

Keegan credits former Honors director Liz Beck with the change in his life path. She encouraged him to accept an internship with the World Food Prize Foundation, where he “had the amazing opportunity of knowing Norman Borlaug, winner of the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize, and working with an extraordinary group of people” on poverty and hunger issues. Currently director of national program development and outreach for the World Food Prize Foundation, Keegan is responsible for establishing and expanding the organization’s youth and educational programs. He previously worked for the UN and non-governmental organizations in Johannesburg, South Africa, and as a consultant for Refugees International in Washington, DC.

According to Keegan, the Honors Program allowed him to balance the small classes and personal attention of a small, private college with the greater academic and social opportunities of a large university. “Among 27,000 students, I never felt like a number. We always felt a genuine sense of concern and interest in our education and well-being,” he says of those days. Keegan enjoyed being in FHP as both a student and a group leader, studying and doing research in Africa and Asia, and developing his own non-profit organization as an undergraduate.

Keegan said, “I will never forget what Dr. Borlaug said to me one day, six years ago. I asked him if he had any regrets in life. He paused a moment and said simply ‘I wish I was able to do more.’ It was one of the most important moments of my life. Each of our lives has profound intrinsic value, but we so rarely focus on its instrumental value...what we can achieve and the difference we can make in the lives of others, if only we put forward the effort.”



From top:  
Carol Jahnke Brumwell,  
Keegan Kautzky

## Don’t Forget the Family Book

Please keep in touch with us via the Honors Family Book. This annual compilation of news, notes, life events and accomplishments of Honors alumni is now online and available via password to all donors. If you are not currently a donor, a printed version of the honors Family Book is available for \$5. To post items, please go to the Honors webpage ([www.honors.iastate.edu](http://www.honors.iastate.edu)) and look in the left column under Alumni. If you have questions about the Honors Family Book, please contact Linda Young at [lindakay@iastate.edu](mailto:lindakay@iastate.edu).

## Letter *(continued from page 1)*

I would love to see at ISU:

- Throughout the United States, other Honors programs provide thought-provoking speakers, people who may be future colleagues for our best and brightest. The Honors Program and the Martin Jischke Honors Building provide an intimate setting for one-on-one conversations with such speakers.
- Past graduates can and should serve as mentors, providing internships and practical experience for current Honors students.
- Undergraduate research is a tremendous opportunity for students. Students need stipends for travel, equipment, independent studies, and experimental costs to help make the research experience a reality.

Alison and I created an endowment to help bring greater opportunities to Honors students at ISU. This newsletter, *With Honors*, is one result of our endowment. Helping alumni to be aware and involved

is a small but important step to upgrading the program to a college. We are “honored” to be a part of the program and its continued success.

We hope you’ll help us enhance the futures of ISU’s best and brightest.

*Dr. Mark Law (EE’81, Masters and Ph.D., Stanford University) is Department Chair of Electrical Engineering at the University of Florida.*

*Alison Law (B.S., accounting) is a professional volunteer involved in children’s education and other issues.*

### Support Honors!

You can help strengthen ISU’s Honors Program and support our outstanding students in academics, research, and all the opportunities that make Honors unique.

If you are interested in making a gift to enhance Honors programming — from exciting speakers to cutting-edge laboratory experiences — your support is welcome. For more information, please contact our development officer, Amy Bickel, at (515) 238-1735 or [arbickel@foundation.iastate.edu](mailto:arbickel@foundation.iastate.edu).



### Side by Side with Cy

Former Honors director Liz Beck (’74, history) is likely to be found in all sorts of interesting places. No matter where she travels, Liz is sure to be in interesting company. Here she is in Hilton Coliseum with everyone’s favorite Cyclone! Liz ran into Cy in May. She was working—for the 27th time!—with the Summer Games sponsored by Special Olympics Iowa (SOIA). SOIA provides sports training and athletic competition for people with intellectual disabilities.

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Iowa State University Honors Program

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